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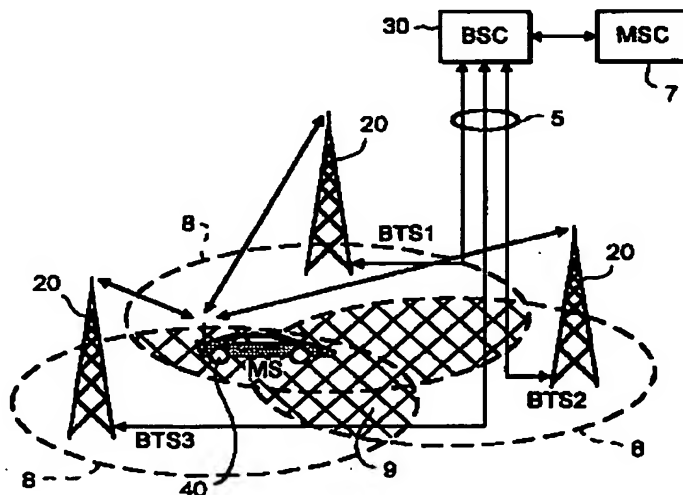
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(54) Title: REDUCING INTERFERENCE IN CELLULAR MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS



(57) Abstract

When a mobile station (40) of a cellular mobile communications network is capable of receiving a downlink signal from a plurality of base transceiver stations (20) of the network, the network identifies at least two different candidate base transceiver station selections, each such selection specifying one or more base transceiver stations of the plurality for possible use in transmitting a subsequent such downlink signal to the mobile station (40). For each of the candidate selections, a measure of the network interference that would be caused by the base transceiver station(s) specified in that candidate selection transmitting the said subsequent downlink signal to the mobile station (40) is determined. In dependence upon the network-interference measures, it is decided which one of the candidate selections is to be used to transmit the subsequent downlink signal to the mobile station (40), so as to tend to reduce network interference arising from the transmission of that downlink signal. Interference in such a cellular mobile telecommunications network can therefore be reduced.

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**REDUCING INTERFERENCE IN CELLULAR MOBILE
COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS**

The present invention relates to cellular mobile communication networks, for example Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) cellular networks.

Figure 1 of the accompanying drawings shows parts
5 of a cellular mobile telecommunication network according to the Telecommunication Industries Association (TIA)/Electronic Industries Association (EIA) Standard TIA/EIA/IS-95 of October 1994 (hereinafter "IS95"). Each of three base transceiver
10 stations (BTSS) 4 (BTS1, BTS2 and BTS3) is connected via a fixed network 5 to a base station controller (BSC) 6, which is in turn connected to a mobile switching centre (MSC) 7. The BSC 6 serves to manage the radio resources of its connected BTSS 4, for
15 example by performing hand-off and allocating radio channels. The MSC 7 serves to provide switching functions and coordinates location registration and call delivery.

Each BTS 4 serves a cell 8. When a mobile station
20 (MS) 10 is in a so-called "soft hand-off" (SHO) region 9 where two or more cells overlap, a mobile station can receive transmission signals (downlink signals) of comparable strength and quality from the respective BTSS of the overlapping cells. Transmission signals
25 (uplink signals) produced by the mobile station (MS) can also be received at comparable strengths and qualities by these different BTSS when the mobile station is in the SHO region 9.

Figure 2 of the accompanying drawings shows a
30 situation where the MS 10 is located within the SHO region 9, and is transmitting such uplink signals that are being received by plural BTSS 4. According to the IS95 standard, a BTS 4 that receives such an uplink signal from the MS 10 relays the signal to the BSC 6
35 via a dedicated connection line of the fixed network 5.

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At the BSC 6, one of the relayed signals is selected based on a comparison of the quality of each of the received signals, and the selected signal is relayed to the MSC 7. This selection is referred to as Selection Diversity.

Similarly, Figure 3 of the accompanying drawings shows a situation where the MS 10 is located within the SHO region 9 and is receiving downlink signals from plural BTSs 4. According to the IS95 standard, downlink signals received by the BSC 6 from the MSC 7 are relayed to all BTSs 4 involved in the soft hand-off via respective connection lines of the fixed network 5, and subsequently transmitted by all the BTSs 4 to the MS 10. At the MS 10 the multiple signals may be combined, for example, by using maximum ratio combination (MRC), or one of them may be selected based on the signal strength or quality, i.e. using Selection Diversity as for the uplink case.

In contrast to, for example, Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM) networks, in CDMA networks each BTS 4 transmits at the same frequency. Consequently, careful control of transmission power must be maintained to minimise interference problems.

Signals are transmitted as a succession of frames according to the IS95 standard. As Figure 4 of the accompanying drawings shows, each frame is of duration 20 ms, and comprises sixteen 1.25 ms time slots. In each time slot several bits of user data and/or control information can be transmitted.

Power control of transmissions from the MS 10 to the BTSs 4 (uplink power control) in IS95 is achieved as follows. When a BTS 4 receives a signal from the MS 10 it determines whether a predetermined property of the received signal (for example absolute signal level, signal to noise ratio (SNR), signal-to-interference ratio (SIR), bit error rate (BER) or frame error rate

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(FER)) exceeds a preselected threshold level. Based on this determination, the BTS 4 instructs the MS 10 either to reduce or to increase its transmission power in the next time slot.

5 For this purpose, two bits in every time slot of a pilot channel (PCH) from the BTS 4 to the MS 10 are allocated for uplink power control (see Figure 4). Both bits have the same value, and accordingly will be referred to hereinafter as the "power control bit" (or
10 PCB) in the singular. The power control bit is assigned a value of zero by the BTS 4 if the MS 10 is required to increase transmission power by 1 dB, and a value of one if the MS 10 is required to decrease transmission power by 1 dB. The BTS 4 is not able to
15 request directly that the MS 10 maintain the same transmission power; only by alternately transmitting ones and zeros in the power control bit is the transmission power maintained at the same level.

 When the MS 10 is in a SHO region 9, the MS 10 is
20 required to make a decision on whether to increase or to decrease uplink transmission power based on a plurality of power control bits received respectively from the BTSs 4 involved in the soft hand-off. Consequently, an OR function is performed on all the
25 power control bits. If the result of this OR function is zero then the MS 10 will increase power on uplink transmissions, and if the result is one then the MS 10 will decrease power on uplink transmissions. In this way, uplink transmission power is only increased if all
30 BTSs 4 ask for an increase.

 Power control of transmissions from the BTS 4 to the MS 10 (downlink power control) in IS95 is achieved as follows. When the MS 10 receives a downlink signal from a BTS 4 (or from each of a plurality of BTSs 4 in
35 soft hand-off operation) via a traffic channel (TCH), the FER of that signal is calculated by the MS 10 which

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reflects the degree to which the traffic-channel signal has been corrupted by, for example, noise. This FER is then relayed by the MS 10 to the BTS 4 which transmitted the downlink signal concerned, and the BTS 4 uses this FER to decide whether to make any change to its downlink transmission power.

The soft hand-off system described above is effective in improving signal transmission between the MS 10 and the network when the MS 10 is located in regions of cell overlap near the boundaries of the individual cells. Signal quality in these regions when using a single BTS 4 may be relatively poor, but by making use of more than one BTS 4 the quality may be substantially improved.

However, the IS95 soft hand-off system has the disadvantage of increasing signal traffic in the cellular network since it is necessary to transmit downlink signals carrying the same data and/or control information to the MS 10 from every BTS 4 involved in the soft hand-off. This duplication of transmissions is undesirable because each transmission is potentially a source of interference to other transmissions in the network.

For example, the downlink power control method aims at ensuring that the MS 10 receives a useful downlink signal from every one of the BTSs 4 involved in the soft hand-off. In the event that the downlink signal from one of the BTSs is undergoing a deep fade, the MS 10 will instruct the BTS concerned to increase its downlink transmission power significantly. However, in this case the BTS concerned will inevitably cause greater interference to other transmissions taking place in its cell and in neighbouring cells. This problem may be exacerbated if, as in the IS95 standard, only one PCB is allocated in common for downlink power control to all of the BTSs involved in

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the soft hand-off. In this case, not only does the BTS which is experiencing a deep fade increase its downlink transmission power significantly, but also every other one of the BTSs involved in the soft hand-off increases its downlink transmission power, significantly increasing the interference within the cellular network as a whole.

Therefore it is desirable to reduce interference in the cellular network associated with the soft hand-off operation. It is also desirable to reduce interference in cellular networks in other situations in which a mobile station is in communications range of more than one base transceiver station.

According to a first aspect of the present invention there is provided a cellular mobile communications network including: candidate base transceiver station identifying means operable, when a mobile station of the network is capable of receiving a downlink signal from a plurality of base transceiver stations of the network, to identify at least two different candidate base transceiver station selections, each such selection specifying one or more base transceiver stations of the said plurality for possible use in transmitting a subsequent such downlink signal to the mobile station; network interference determining means operable, for each of the candidate selections, to produce a measure of the network interference that would be caused by the base transceiver station(s) specified in that candidate selection transmitting the said subsequent downlink signal to the mobile station; and decision means operable, in dependence upon the network-interference measures, to decide which one of the said candidate selections is to be used to transmit the said subsequent downlink signal to the mobile station, so as to tend to reduce network interference arising from the

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transmission of that downlink signal.

According to a second aspect of the present invention there is provided a mobile station, for use in a cellular mobile communications network, including:

5 candidate base transceiver station identifying means operable, when the mobile station is capable of receiving a downlink signal from a plurality of base transceiver stations of the network, to identify at least two different candidate base transceiver station

10 selections, each such candidate selection specifying one or more base transceiver stations of the said plurality for possible use in transmitting a subsequent such downlink signal to the mobile station; network interference determining means operable for each of the

15 candidate selections, to produce a measure of the network interference that would be caused by the base transceiver station(s) specified in that selection transmitting the said subsequent downlink signal to the said mobile station; and decision means operable, in

20 dependence upon the said network-interference measures, to decide which one of the candidate selections should be used to transmit the said subsequent downlink signal to the mobile station, so as to tend to reduce network interference arising from the transmission of that

25 downlink signal.

According to a third aspect of the present invention there is provided a base transceiver station, for use in a cellular mobile communications network, including: candidate base transceiver station

30 identifying means operable, when a mobile station of the network is capable of receiving a downlink signal from a plurality of base transceiver stations of the network including the claimed base transceiver station, to identify at least two different candidate base

35 transceiver station selections, each such candidate selection specifying one or more base transceiver

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stations of the said plurality for possible use in transmitting a subsequent such downlink signal to the mobile station; network interference determining means operable, for each of the said candidate selections, to produce a measure of the network interference that would be caused by the base transceiver station(s) specified in that selection transmitting the said subsequent downlink signal to the mobile station; and decision means operable, in dependence upon the network-interference measures, to decide which one of the said candidate selections should be used to transmit the said subsequent downlink signal to the mobile station, so as to tend to reduce network interference arising from the transmission of that downlink signal.

According to a fourth aspect of the present invention there is provided a base station controller, for use in a cellular mobile communications network, including: candidate base transceiver station identifying means operable, when a mobile station of the network is capable of receiving a downlink signal from a plurality of base transceiver stations of the network, to identify at least two different candidate base transceiver station selections, each such candidate selection specifying one or more base transceiver stations of the said plurality for possible use in transmitting a subsequent such downlink signal to the said mobile station; network interference determining means operable, for each of the said candidate selections, to produce a measure of the network interference that would be caused by the base transceiver station(s) specified in that selection transmitting the said subsequent downlink signal to the mobile station; and decision means operable, in dependence upon the network-interference measures, to decide which one of the candidate selections to use to

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transmit the said subsequent downlink signal to the mobile station, so as to tend to reduce network interference arising from the transmission of that downlink signal.

5 According to a fifth aspect of the present invention there is provided a communications method for use in a cellular mobile communications network, including: when a mobile station of the network is capable of receiving a downlink signal from a plurality
10 of base transceiver stations of the network, identifying at least two different candidate base transceiver station selections, each such selection specifying one or more base transceiver stations of the said plurality for possible use in transmitting a
15 subsequent such downlink signal to the mobile station; producing, for each of the said candidate selections, a measure of the network interference that would be caused by the base transceiver station(s) specified in that selection transmitting the said subsequent
20 downlink signal to the mobile station; and deciding, in dependence upon the network-interference measures, which one of the said candidate selections to use to transmit that subsequent downlink signal to the mobile station, so as to tend to reduce network interference
25 arising from the transmission of that downlink signal.

 In one embodiment of the first to fifth aspects of the invention, the candidate selections may include, for each BTS of the plurality, a selection in which just that BTS is specified, as well as a further
30 selection in which all the BTSs of the plurality are specified. It is not essential for the candidate selections to include selections specifying only one BTS. For example, if there are three BTSs involved in a soft hand-off operation, the selections could be BTS1
35 + BTS2, BTS2 + BTS3, BTS3 + BTS1, and BTS1 + BTS2 + BTS3. It is also not essential for the candidate

selections to include a selection specifying all the
BTSS involved in the soft hand-off. Furthermore, the
transmission powers for the BTSS specified in a
particular selection can be set to any suitable
5 combination of values capable of facilitating adequate
reception of the downlink signal at the subject mobile
station. Thus, for example, two or more candidate
selections could specify the same BTSS but specify
different respective sets of transmission powers for
10 the selections. In other words, two candidate
selections could differ from one another only in
respect of the transmission powers of the (same)
specified BTSS.

According to a sixth aspect of the present
15 invention there is provided a mobile station, for use a
cellular mobile communications network, including: base
transceiver station decision means operable, when the
mobile station is capable of receiving a downlink
signal from a plurality of base transceiver stations of
20 the network, to determine that at least one of the base
transceiver stations of the said plurality is not to
transmit a subsequent such downlink signal to the
mobile station; and base transceiver station informing
means operable to inform the base transceiver stations
25 of the said plurality of the determination made by the
said base transceiver station decision means using one
or more uplink signals transmitted by the mobile
station to such base transceiver stations.

According to a seventh aspect of the present
30 invention there is provided a base transceiver station
for use in a cellular mobile communications network,
including: receiver means for receiving uplink signals
from a mobile station of the network, one or more of
which uplink signals includes, when the mobile station
35 is capable of receiving a downlink signal from a
plurality of base transceiver stations of the network

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including the claimed base transceiver station, base transceiver station selection information specifying that at least one of the base transceiver stations of the said plurality is not to transmit a subsequent such downlink signal to the mobile station; and disabling means operable to process such base transceiver station selection information and to prevent the claimed base transceiver station from transmitting such a subsequent downlink signal if the received base transceiver station selection information specifies that the claimed base transceiver station is not to transmit the said subsequent downlink signal.

The sixth and seventh aspects of the present invention are not limited to downlink transmission selection for the purpose of interference reduction. Embodiments of these aspects of the invention can be used in any situation in which it is desired to prevent at least one BTS in communications range of a mobile station from transmitting a downlink signal to that mobile station.

Reference will now be made, by way of example, to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1, discussed hereinbefore, shows parts of a cellular mobile telecommunication network according to IS95;

Figure 2, also discussed hereinbefore, shows a schematic view for use in explaining processing of uplink signals in a soft hand-off operation performed by the Figure 1 network;

Figure 3, also discussed hereinbefore, shows a schematic view for use in explaining processing of downlink signals in such a soft hand-off operation;

Figure 4, also discussed hereinbefore, illustrates the format of a time frame in the Figure 1 network;

Figure 5 shows parts of a mobile telecommunication network embodying the present invention;

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Figure 6 shows parts of a mobile station embodying to the present invention;

Figure 7 is a detailed block diagram showing parts of the Figure 6 mobile station;

5 Figure 8 is a flowchart for use in explaining operation of the Figure 6 mobile station;

Figure 9 is a schematic view for illustrating a possible format of a message transmitted by the Figure 6 mobile station;

10 Figure 10 shows parts of a base transceiver station embodying the present invention;

Figure 11 shows parts of another base transceiver embodying the present invention;

15 Figure 12 is a detailed block diagram of parts of the Figure 11 base transceiver station; and

Figure 13 shows a flowchart for use in explaining operation of the Figure 11 base transceiver station.

20 Figure 5 shows parts of a mobile telecommunication network embodying the present invention. In Figure 5, elements that are the same as elements of the Figure 1 network described previously have the same reference numerals and an explanation thereof is omitted.

25 The Figure 5 network is a wideband CDMA (W-CDMA) network for a proposed new standard for mobile telecommunications, referred to as a universal mobile telecommunications system (UMTS) or UMTS terrestrial radio access (UTRA). This is generally similar to the IS95-standard network described previously, although certain implementation details are yet to be finalised.

30 Details that are different from IS95 include the frame duration, which is 10ms, and the time-slot duration which is 625 μ s. The overall bit rate is within the range from 8kbits/s to 2Mbits/s. Also downlink power control in W-CDMA is closed-loop and is based on the

35 same principles as the uplink power control.

In Figure 5, each of three base transceiver

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stations (BTSs) 20 (BTS1, BTS2 and BTS3) is connected via a fixed network 5 to a base station controller (BSC) 30, which is in turn connected to a mobile switching centre (MSC) 7. Each BTS 20 serves a cell 8.
5 A mobile station (MS) 40 is in a soft hand-off (SHO) region 9 and can receive downlink signals from, and transmit uplink signals to, all the BTSs 20 involved in the soft hand-off.

10 The Figure 5 network corresponds generally with the Figure 1 network, but the MS 40, BTSs 20 and BSC 30 are constructed and operate differently from the corresponding elements in Figure 1.

Figure 6 is a block diagram showing parts of a MS 40 embodying the present invention. An antenna element 42 is connected (e.g. via a duplexer - not shown) to a receiver portion 44 and a transmitter portion 46. A
15 downlink signal processing portion 48 receives from the receiver portion 44 respective downlink signals DS1 to DS_n produced by n BTSs BTS1 to BTS_n involved in the soft hand-off operation. The downlink signal
20 processing portion 48 applies a BTS selection message BSM to the transmitter portion 46.

Figure 7 shows a block diagram of the downlink signal processing portion 48. The downlink signal
25 processing portion 48 includes a downlink signal input portion 52 which receives the downlink signals DS1 to DS_n from the receiver portion 44. The downlink signal processing portion 48 further includes respective TX and RX power storage portions 54 and 56, each connected
30 to the downlink signal input portion 52. The TX power storage portion 54 receives a single power control bit PCB, or respective power control bits PCB1 to PCB_n corresponding respectively to the BTSs involved in the soft hand-off operation, and also receives from the
35 downlink signal input portion 52 initial transmission powers TXP1 to TXP_n corresponding respectively to those

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BTSS.

5 The downlink signal input portion 52 also applies to the RX power storage portion 56 received power measures RXP1 to RXPn corresponding respectively to the BTSS, each representing the power at which a downlink signal from the corresponding BTS is received by the mobile station.

10 Each of the power storage portions 54 and 56 includes storage regions corresponding respectively to the different BTSS.

15 The downlink signal processing portion 48 also includes a required RX power calculation portion 58 which receives a further signal measure FER, representing a downlink frame error rate determined by the mobile station, from the downlink signal input portion 52.

20 The downlink signal processing portion 48 further includes a path loss calculation portion 60 which receives from the TX power storage portion 54 respective transmit powers TXP1 to TXPn for the different BTSS and also receives respective receive powers RXP1 to RXPn for the different BTSS from the RX power storage portion 56.

25 The downlink signal processing portion 48 further includes a required TX power calculation portion 62 which receives respective path loss measures PL1 to PLn for the different BTSS from the path loss calculation portion 60 and a required RX power RXP from the required RX power calculation portion 58.

30 The downlink signal processing portion 48 further includes a required TX power storage portion 64 and an interference calculation portion 66, both of which receive from the required TX power calculation portion 62 first and second sets of required transmission powers. The first set of required transmission powers P_{BTS1} to P_{BTSn} represent required transmission powers

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of the different BTSs when the mobile station 40 is not using maximum ratio combining (MRC). The second set of transmission power measures P'_{BTS1} to P'_{BTSn} represent the required transmission powers of the different BTSs when MRC is employed at the MS40. The required TX power storage portion 64 has first and second sets of storage regions corresponding to the two sets of transmission power measures.

The downlink signal processing portion 48 further includes an interference storage portion 68 which receives interference measures I_{BTS1} to I_{BTSn} corresponding respectively to the different BTSs (transmitting alone), as well as a further interference measure I_{MRC} representing interference when all BTSs are used to transmit downlink signals and MRC is performed at the MS 40. The interference storage portion 68 has storage regions corresponding respectively to these different interference measures.

The downlink signal processing portion 48 further includes an interference comparison portion 70 which receives the interference measures I_{BTS1} to I_{BTSn} and I_{MRC} from the interference storage portion 68 and produces a comparison signal COMP which is applied to a BTS selection portion 72. The BTS selection portion 72 produces a BTS selection message (BSM) and a power control bit PCB (or plural PCBs $PCB1$ to $PCBn$) which are applied to the transmitter portion 46 of the mobile station 40.

Operation of the mobile station 40 of Figure 7 will now explained with reference to the flowchart of Figure 8. In this example, it will be assumed, for the sake of simplicity, that there are only two BTSs involved in the soft hand-off operation.

In a first step S1 the downlink signal input portion 52 detects, in a downlink signal received from a first one (hereinafter $BTS1$) of the BTSs involved in

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the soft hand-off operation, for example a signal on a dedicated control channel DCCH thereof, the initial transmit power ITXP1 of BTS1.

As explained previously, the downlink power control method proposed for use in W-CDMA adjusts the transmission power of the BTSs in communication with a particular MS in dependence upon power control bits PCBs generated by the mobile station. At present, the proposed standard for W-CDMA specifies that a single PCB be used to control the downlink transmit powers of all of the BTSs involved in the soft hand-off operation. Thus, in this case all the involved BTSs increase or reduce their transmission powers together in accordance with the single PCB. However, it is also possible, in an embodiment of the present invention, to allocate each BTS involved in the soft hand-off operation its own individual PCB, enabling the MS to control the downlink transmission powers of the different involved BTSs independently of one another. In this case (as shown in parenthesis in Figure 7) the TX power storage portion 54 receives PCBs PCB1 to PCBn corresponding respectively to the different BTSs involved in the soft hand-off operation.

In step S1 the initial transmission power ITXP1 for BTS1 is stored in the storage region allocated to BTS1 in the TX power storage portion 54. Thereafter, each time a new PCB (PCB or PCB1, as the case may be) applicable to BTS1 is generated by the MS (for example every time slot) the TX power storage portion 54 updates the transmission power TXP1 stored in the storage region for BTS1 so that, at any given time, the value stored represents the instantaneous downlink transmission power of BTS1.

In step S2 the initial transmission power ITXP2 for the second BTS (hereinafter BTS2) involved in the soft hand-off operation is detected by the downlink

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signal input portion 52 in one of the downlink signals received from BTS2 and is stored in the storage region of the TX power storage portion 54 allocated to BTS2. The stored transmission power TXP2 for BTS2 is also
5 updated each time a PCB (PCB or PCB2) applicable to BTS2 is generated by the mobile station.

Next, in step S3, the downlink signal input portion 52 processes the downlink signal DS1 received from BTS1 (either on a traffic channel TCH thereof or
10 on a control channel dedicated control channel DCCH) thereof) and derives therefrom a measure RXP1 of the received power of the downlink signal DS1 concerned. This measure (for example the received signal strength RSS) is stored in the storage region allocated to BTS1
15 in the RX power storage portion 56.

In step S4 the same operation is performed for BTS2 and the result stored in the storage region allocated to BTS2 in the RX power storage portion 56. Incidentally, in steps S3 and S4, the received power
20 RXP may be calculated from the DCCH downlink signal in the event (as explained later) that the traffic channel TCH from the BTS concerned is switched off.

In step S5 the path loss calculation portion 60 receives from the storage location for BTS1 in the TX power storage portion 54 the stored (and updated)
25 transmission power TXP1 for BTS1, and also receives from the storage region for BTS1 in the RX power storage portion 56 the received power RXP1 for BTS1. The path loss calculation portion 60 subtracts the
30 received power RXP1 from the transmit power TXP1 to determine the path loss PL1 for BTS1. In step S6 the same operations are repeated for BTS2.

In step S7 the required RX power calculation portion 58 determines, based on a predetermined
35 characteristic (e.g. the frame error rate FER) of the received downlink signals as a whole (e.g. after

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maximum ratio combining MRC), a required RX power $RRXP$ which represents the minimum power that the mobile station presently needs to receive in order to produce an overall downlink signal DS of acceptable quality.

5 In step S8 the required TX power calculation portion 62 receives the path loss $PL1$ for $BTS1$ and the required RX power $RRXP$. Based on these inputs, it calculates a downlink transmission power P_{BTS1} required from $BTS1$ assuming that $BTS1$ is the only BTS permitted to send the downlink signal in the next time slot to the mobile station. This required transmission power P_{BTS1} may be calculated, for example, by adding together $PL1$ and $RRXP$. The calculated required downlink transmission power P_{BTS1} is then stored in the TX power storage portion 64 in the storage region allocated to $BTS1$ in the first set of storage regions thereof (the set relating to the case in which maximum ratio combining (MRC) is not performed in the mobile station).

20 Then, in step S9, the interference calculation portion 66 receives the required downlink transmission power P_{BTS1} calculated in step S8 and calculates therefrom a measure I_{BTS1} of the amount of network interference that would be caused by $BTS1$ (alone) operating at the downlink transmission power P_{BTS1} . This measure is stored in an appropriate one of the storage region allocated to $BTS1$ in the interference storage portion 68.

30 Next, in steps S10 and steps S11 the processings of steps S8 and S9 are repeated for $BTS2$. The resulting required downlink transmission power P_{BTS2} and the network-interference measure I_{BTS2} are stored respectively in storage regions allocated to $BTS2$ in the portions 64 and 68.

35 In step S12 the required TX power calculation portion 62 calculates, for each of the BTSs $BTS1$ and

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BTS2, the required downlink transmission power P'_{BTS1} or P'_{BTS2} assuming that MRC is to be used at the mobile station. These results are stored in storage regions allocated to BTS1 and BTS2 in the second set of storage regions of the required TX power storage portion 64.

In step S13 the interference calculation portion 66 employs the required downlink transmission powers P'_{BTS1} and P'_{BTS2} calculated in step S12 to determine a measure of the network interference that would result assuming that BTS1 is transmitting at P'_{BTS1} and BTS2 is transmitting at P'_{BTS2} . The resulting interference measure I_{MRC} is stored in a further one of the storage regions of the interference storage portion 68.

Next, in step S14 the interference comparison portion 70 compares the interference measures I_{BTS1} and I_{BTS2} retrieved from the interference storage portion 68. If I_{BTS1} is less than I_{BTS2} , processing proceeds to step S15 in which I_{BTS1} is compared with I_{MRC} . If $I_{BTS1} < I_{MRC}$ in step S15, in step S16 the BTS selection portion 72 determines that the downlink signal in the next time slot should be sent to the mobile station by BTS1 alone, on the basis that this will result in the lowest network interference. The BTS selection portion 72 generates a BTS selection message (BSM) specifying that BTS2 is not to transmit the downlink signal in the next time slot. The BSM is delivered to the transmitter portion 46 of the mobile station for transmission to BTS2. At the same time, the BTS selection portion 72 determines the power control bit PCB to be transmitted to BTS1 to control the downlink transmission power of BTS1 in the next time slot so that it has the value P_{BTS1} calculated in step S8. As noted previously, this PCB may be a single PCB common to all BTSs involved in the soft hand-off operation, or a unique PCB (PCB1) for BTS1.

If, in step S14, I_{BTS2} was found to be less than

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or equal to I_{BTS1} , or if in step S15 I_{MRC} was found to be less than or equal to I_{BTS1} , processing proceeds to step S17. In step S17, the interference comparison portion 70 compares I_{BTS2} with I_{MRC} . If I_{BTS2} is less than I_{MRC} processing proceeds to step S18 in which the BTS selection portion 72 determines that the downlink signal for the mobile station in the next time slot should be transmitted by BTS2 alone, on the basis that BTS2 operating alone will produce the lowest network interference. In this case, the BTS selection portion 72 generates a BSM which instructs BTS1 not to transmit in the next time slot. Also, the PCB applicable to BTS2 is set by the BTS selection portion 72 to control the downlink transmission power of BTS2 to meet the required TX power P_{BTS2} calculated in step S10.

If in step S17 the result of the comparison is that I_{MRC} is less than or equal to I_{BTS2} , processing proceeds to step S19 in which the BTS selection portion 72 determines that both BTS1 and BTS2 should be used to transmit the downlink signal in the next time slot, on the basis that this will result in the lowest network interference. In this case, the BTS selection portion 72 generates a BSM specifying that both BTSs are to transmit in the next time slot, and sets the PCB (or PCBs) to cause the BTSs to transmit the downlink signal in the next time slot at the required transmission powers P'_{BTS1} and P'_{BTS2} calculated in step S12.

Thus, in the example described above it can be seen that three different candidate BTS selections are identified: a first candidate selection in which BTS1 alone is specified for transmitting the downlink signal; a second candidate selection in which BTS2 alone is specified for transmitting the downlink signal; and a third candidate selection in which both BTS1 and BTS2 are specified for transmitting the downlink signal. For each candidate selection, the

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required transmission power P_{BTS} (or P'_{BTS}) of each BTS specified in the selection is calculated and a measure of the network interference that would result from the specified BTS(s) transmitting is also calculated.

5 These network-interference measures are then employed (e.g. the lowest measure is found by comparison of the measures) to decide which of the candidate selections to use for transmission of the downlink signal, so as to tend to reduce the network interference associated
10 with that transmission.

It is not essential for the candidate selections to include selections specifying only one BTS. For example, if there are three BTSs involved in a soft hand-off operation, the selections could be BTS1 +
15 BTS2, BTS2 + BTS3, BTS3 + BTS1, and BTS1 + BTS2 + BTS3. It is also not essential for the candidate selections to include a selection specifying all the BTSs involved in the soft hand-off. Furthermore, the transmission powers for the BTSs specified in a particular selection
20 can be set to any suitable combination of values capable of facilitating adequate reception of the downlink signal at the subject mobile station. Thus, for example, two or more candidate selections could specify the same BTSs but specify different respective
25 sets of transmission powers for the selections.

One example of the possible format of the BTS selection message BSM will now be explained with reference to Figure 9.

The BTSs involved in a soft hand-off operation are
30 ranked in some way. For example, the ranking may be carried out in the mobile station based on a predetermined property of the respective downlink signals DS1 to DS_n that are received by the MS 40, for example the received signal strength (RSS).

35 Alternatively, the ranking may be on a "first-come first-served" basis, i.e. on the order in which the

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BTSS became involved in the soft hand-off operation. Alternatively, the ranking could be random. Once the ranking has been determined, the mobile station sends a ranking message RM, indicating the order in which the BTSS are presently ranked, via a control channel to all BTSS.

As shown in Figure 9, the BSM has one bit corresponding to each rank of BTS, and these bits are arranged in the BSM in the ranking order determined by the MS. Take, for example, the case described previously with reference to Figure 8 in which there are only two BTSS involved in the soft hand-off operation, namely BTS1 and BTS2. Assume also that, in the order of ranking determined by the mobile station, BTS2 is the highest-ranked BTS (rank ①), and that the other BTS, BTS1, has rank ②. Assume also that the outcome of the comparisons of the interference measures is the outcome shown in S16, namely that BTS2 should not transmit the downlink signal in the next time slot. To communicate this result to the BTSS involved in the soft hand-off operation, the first bit (corresponding to rank ①) in the BSM is set to 0, to indicate that BTS2 should not transmit the downlink signal in the next time slot. The second bit of the BSM (which corresponds to the rank-② BTS) is set to 1, to indicate that the rank-② BTS, BTS1, should transmit the downlink signal in the next time slot. Any remaining bits of the BSM can be set to a "don't-care" state, since in this example only two BTSS are involved in the soft hand-off operation. Incidentally, the BSM in this case could consist of two bits only, of course.

The ranking of a BTS may periodically require updating, for several reasons. Firstly, as the MS moves, a downlink signal may be received from a new BTS or an existing BTS may no longer be able to provide a detectable downlink signal. Secondly, the qualities of

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the signals received from the BTSs 20 may have changed, e.g. due to fading. Thus, from time to time a ranking update is required. Such an update may be carried out periodically at regular time intervals (for example
5 every several hundred milliseconds as in GSM networks), or every frame or even every time slot. Alternatively, the ranking could be updated only when a new BTS is detected or contact with an existing one lost.

Figure 10 is a block diagram showing parts of a
10 BTS 20 embodying the present invention. This BTS 20 is specially adapted to receive and process the ranking message RM and the BTS selection message BSM sent by the MS 40 of Figure 6.

An antenna element 22 is connected (e.g. via a
15 duplexer - not shown) to a receiver portion 24 and a transmitter portion 26. A soft hand-off control portion 28 receives an uplink signal US from the receiver portion 24, and in turn applies the received US (or a signal derived therefrom) to the fixed network
20 5 for transmission to the BSC 30. The transmitter portion 26 receives a downlink signal DS via the connection line 5 from the BSC 30 (Figure 5) and a disabling signal DIS from the soft hand-off control portion 28.

25 In use of the BTS 20, the uplink signals sent by the MS 40 when it is in the soft hand-off region 9 include, from time to time, a ranking message RM. The uplink signals US detected by the receiver portion 24 in the BTS 20 are applied to the soft hand-off control
30 portion 28. When the soft hand-off control portion 28 detects that a ranking message RM is included in one of the uplink signals US received thereby, it processes the ranking message concerned to determine the rank of its BTS within the ranking order determined by the MS.

35 In each time slot, the uplink signals US produced by the receiver portion 24 also include a BTS selection

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message BSM determined by the MS 40 as described above.

Operation of the soft hand-off control portion 28 in response to the presence of such a BSM in the uplink signal US produced by the receiver portion 24 will now be described.

It is assumed that, by the time the BSM is received, a ranking message RM has already been received and processed (as indicated above) by the soft hand-off control portion 28.

The BSM is supplied by the receiver portion 24 to the soft hand-off control portion 28 where is examined. The soft hand-off control portion 28 checks the rank of its BTS based on the last-received ranking message and then examines the bit corresponding to that rank in the BSM. If the bit is 0 the soft hand-off control portion 28 applies a disabling signal DIS to the transmitter portion 26 to prevent it from transmitting the downlink signal in the next time slot.

The measure of network interference I_{BTS1} , I_{BTS2} or I_{MRC} can be calculated as follows by considering the interference that would be experienced by an imaginary mobile station, other than the subject mobile station, operating in the soft hand-off region (Figure 5), as a consequence of the BTS(s) concerned transmitting at the determined required transmission power(s). In the case of I_{BTS1} , for example, the interference is calculated based on the required transmission power P_{BTS1} from BTS_1 to the subject mobile station and the associated mean path loss experienced by the imaginary mobile station (which is the same as for the subject mobile station). This mean path loss is a time-averaged path loss for which the averaging period is chosen so as to average out (or ideally eliminate) the effects of Rayleigh fading. In other words, the path loss variation due to Rayleigh fading is averaged out.

In the case of I_{MRC} the interference is calculated

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based on the cumulative sum of the respective carrier power levels of BTS1 and BTS2 at the antenna of the imaginary mobile station. Again, these carrier power levels are calculated based on the required

5 transmission powers P'_{BTS1} and P'_{BTS2} for BTS1 and BTS2 when MRC is used and the respective mean path losses which have already been established at the subject mobile station (and are assumed to be the same for the imaginary mobile station).

10 Take, for example, a situation in which the downlink signal from BTS2 is undergoing a deep fade. This means that $PL2$ will be large relative to $PL1$. In this case, the required transmission power P_{BTS2} for BTS2 will be large as compared to the required

15 transmission power P_{BTS1} for BTS1. Thus, I_{BTS2} will be large relative to I_{BTS1} . Also, in view of the large $PL2$, P'_{BTS2} will also be large so that I_{MRC} will be larger than I_{BTS1} . Accordingly, the decision is made that BTS2 should not transmit the downlink signal in

20 the next time slot, so as to reduce the network interference resulting from transmission of that downlink signal.

In the embodiment described above, the selection of the BTS to be used to transmit the downlink signal

25 in the next time slot is made in the mobile station 40. However, it is not essential that this decision be made there. In another embodiment, which will be described hereinafter with reference to Figures 11 to 13, each BTS includes a modified soft hand-off control portion,

30 and these modified hand-off control portions cooperate to carry out the downlink-signal decision making.

Referring firstly to Figure 11, a BTS 120 is constituted in basically the same manner as the BTS 20 described previously with reference to Figure 9 but has

35 a modified soft hand-off control portion 128 in place of the soft hand-off control portion 28 in the Figure 9

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BTS.

An example of the constitution of the modified soft hand-off control portion 128 is shown in Figure 12.

5 As will appear from Figure 12 itself, the modified soft hand-off control portion 128 in this embodiment includes the portions 54, 56, 58, 60, 62, 64, 66, 68 and 70 previously included in the downlink signal processing portion 48 of the MS 40 in the Figure 7 embodiment. However, in place of the downlink signal processing portion 52 in the Figure 7 embodiment, the Figure 12 embodiment has an uplink signal input portion 152. Also, in place of the BTS selection portion 72 in the Figure 7 embodiment, the Figure 12 embodiment has a decision portion 172.

10 Operation of the Figure 12 embodiment will now be described with reference to the flowchart of Figure 13. Again, in the Figure 13 flowchart it is assumed, for the sake of simplicity, that only two BTSs, BTS1 and BTS2, are involved in the soft hand-off operation. As will be apparent from Figure 13 itself, many of the steps in the Figure 13 flowchart are the same as (or correspond to) the steps S1 to S19 in the Figure 8 flowchart relating to operation of the Figure 7 embodiment.

20 The Figure 13 flowchart relates to processing performed at BTS1 during the soft hand-off operation. Accordingly, the step S1 used in the Figure 8 flowchart is not required in Figure 13, as the soft hand-off control portion 128 in BTS1 already knows the instantaneous downlink transmission power of BTS1 (this is stored in the storage region allocated to BTS1 in the TX power storage portion 54). However, BTS1 does need to know the downlink transmission power of the other BTS, BTS2, involved in the soft hand-off operation. Accordingly, in step S2, the initial

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transmission power ITXP2 for BTS2 is received (in one of the uplink signals US) from the mobile station. The mobile station can include this information for example in the ranking message RM which it transmits
5 periodically or whenever a new BTS becomes involved in the soft hand-off operation. The received initial transmission power ITXP2 for BTS2 is stored in the storage region allocated to BTS2 in the TX power storage portion 54.

10 Incidentally, the downlink power control in this embodiment is performed in the same way as in the Figure 7 embodiment. Thus, the mobile station may either use a single PCB in common to control the downlink transmission powers of all of the BTSs
15 involved in the soft hand-off operation, or alternatively the mobile station may allocate each involved BTS its own PCB. In any event, the TX power storage portion 54 needs to receive the PCBs applicable to all of the BTSs involved in the soft hand-off
20 operation. If there is a single PCB allocated to all the BTSs, then this single PCB will be available to the soft hand-off control portion 128 from one of the uplink signals US received from the mobile station. If, on the other hand, each involved BTS is allocated
25 its own PCB by the mobile station, then some mechanism must be provided for enabling each involved BTS to receive the respective PCBs of all the other involved BTSs. One suitable mechanism for achieving this is described in our copending patent application No.
30 [Agent's Ref: HL59532]. In this proposed mechanism, the mobile station includes, in an uplink signal transmitted thereby to each involved BTS, a power control message (PCM) made up, in the order of ranking of the involved BTSs determined by the mobile station,
35 the respective PCBs of all the involved BTSs. Thus, this PCM would have a format similar to that of the BSM

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shown in Figure 9, except that in this case each bit would be the PCB of the BTS concerned.

Thus, in the Figure 12 embodiment, any PCB (or PCM as the case may be) included in an uplink signal US received from the mobile station is detected by the uplink signal input portion 152 and supplied to the TX power storage portion 54 so as to enable the TX power storage portion 54 to update the transmission power TXP for each of the BTSs involved in the soft hand-off operation.

After the step S2, processing proceeds to a step S3'. This step S3' corresponds generally to the step S3 in the Figure 8 flowchart. In this step S3', the uplink signal input portion 152 detects, in one of the uplink signals US received from the mobile station, a transmission power control (TPC) signal representing the power RXP1 at which the downlink signal from BTS1 was received by the mobile station. This received power RXP1 for BTS1 is stored in the storage region allocated to BTS1 in the RX power storage portion 56. In step S4' the same operation is repeated for BTS2.

Then, in steps S5 and S6, the path loss calculation portion 60 calculates the respective path losses PL1 and PL2 for the downlink signals sent to the mobile station by BTS1 and BTS2.

In step S7', which corresponds to the step S7 in the Figure 8 flowchart, the required RX power calculation portion 58 determines a required receive power RXP for the mobile station. This may be achieved, for example, by the mobile station including, in one of the uplink signals US transmitted thereby, a measure of the downlink channel performance, for example the frame error rate (FER) of the downlink signal received by the mobile station. When such a communications-channel measure (FER) in a received uplink signal US is detected by the uplink signal input

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portion 152 it supplies this measure to the required RX power calculation portion 58 for use thereby in generating the RXP.

5 The steps S8 to S15 and S17 in Figure 13 are then the same as the corresponding steps in the Figure 8 flowchart.

10 In step S16', which corresponds to the step S16 in the Figure 8 flowchart, the decision portion 172 in the soft hand-off control portion 128 of BTS1 determines that BTS1 (alone) should transmit the downlink signal DS in the next time slot to the mobile station on the basis that this will result in the lowest network interference. The decision portion 172 then generates suitable power control information (for example a PCB) so as to adjust the downlink transmission power to the value P_{BTS1} determined in step S8.

15 Rather than a PCB, this power control information may simply be the explicit required transmission power P_{BTS1} in this case.

20 If the determination in step S17 is that I_{BTS2} is less than I_{MRC} , the decision portion 172 determines in step S18' that BTS1 should not transmit the downlink signal in the next time slot. Thus, the decision portion 172 applies the disabling signal DIS to the transmission portion 26 in its BTS (BTS1).

25 If, on the other hand, in step S17 it is determined that I_{MRC} is less than or equal to I_{BTS2} , then in step S19' the decision portion 172 determines that both BTS1 and BTS2 should be used in the next time slot to transmit the downlink signal. In this case, it sends appropriate power control information (a PCB or possibly the explicit downlink transmission power P'_{BTS1}) to the transmission portion 26.

30 It will be appreciated that the processing shown in Figure 13 is also carried out independently in the other BTS, BTS2, involved in the soft hand-off

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operation (in that case, of course, in step S2, the received initial transmission power that is received and stored is ITXP1 relating to BTS1).

5 Naturally, the decision-making embodied in steps S14 to S19' in Figure 13 must be made consistent in each different BTS involved in the soft hand-off operation so that there will always be at least one BTS which transmits the downlink signal to the mobile station in the next time slot.

10 In the embodiments described above, the TX power storage portion 54 receives the initial downlink transmission powers of the involved BTSs and then updates these as necessary on receipt of the power control bits PCBs for the different BTSs. However, it
15 would also be possible for the instantaneous downlink transmission powers TXP themselves to be supplied directly to the TX power storage portion 54 in each time slot in place of the PCBs.

20 It will also be appreciated that it would also be possible for the decision as to which BTS is to transmit the downlink signal in the time slot to be made in the BSC 30 instead of in each involved BTS. In this case, the elements 54 to 70, 152 and 172 shown in Figure 11 would be provided in the BSC instead of in
25 each BTS.

30 It will also be understood that the way in which the transmission powers TXP (or IXTP + EPCB) and receive powers RXP are made available to the decision-making entity (be it MS, BTS or BSC) is not critical to the invention. For example, it is not necessary for the MS to rank the BTSs. All that is necessary is that each BTS is able to identify to which BTS a particular received value (e.g. ITXP or RXP) relates. Such
35 identification could be carried out in many different ways other than ranking.

It will also be understood that it is not

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necessary for the processing shown in Figures 8 and 13 to take place every time slot. It would be possible for the signals such as RXP and PCM to be transmitted only once per frame, in which case the decision-making would be made on a frame-by-frame basis.

In the embodiment of Figures 6 to 8 the processing is carried out mainly in the mobile station, whereas in the embodiment of Figures 11 to 13 the processing is carried out mainly in the BTSs. However, the present invention is not limited to these possibilities. For example, the processing could be carried out mainly in the base station controller or in the mobile switching centre. It would also be possible for the processing to be distributed amongst any two or more of these network elements.

Furthermore, it would be possible for the decisions to be made at time intervals other than frames or time slots, for example based on a time interval consistent with the fading characteristics of the RF channels in the network.

Although the present invention has been described above in relation to the proposed European wideband CDMA system (UTRA) it will be appreciated that it can also be applied to a system otherwise in accordance with the IS95 standard. It would also be possible to apply the invention in other cellular networks not using CDMA, for example networks using one or more of the following: multiple-access techniques: time-division multiple access (TDMA), wavelength-division multiple access (WDMA), frequency-division multiple access (FDMA) and space-division multiple access (SDMA).

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CLAIMS

1. A cellular mobile communications network including:

candidate base transceiver station identifying means operable, when a mobile station of the network is capable of receiving a downlink signal from a plurality of base transceiver stations of the network, to identify at least two different candidate base transceiver station selections, each such selection specifying one or more base transceiver stations of the said plurality for possible use in transmitting a subsequent such downlink signal to the mobile station;

network interference determining means operable, for each of the candidate selections, to produce a measure of the network interference that would be caused by the base transceiver station(s) specified in that candidate selection transmitting the said subsequent downlink signal to the mobile station; and

decision means operable, in dependence upon the network-interference measures, to decide which one of the said candidate selections is to be used to transmit the said subsequent downlink signal to the mobile station, so as to tend to reduce network interference arising from the transmission of that downlink signal.

2. A network as claimed in claim 1, wherein the said mobile station includes the said candidate base transceiver station identifying means and the said network interference determining means and the said decision means.

3. A network as claimed in claim 2, wherein the said decision means are operable to include, in one or more uplink signals transmitted thereby to each base transceiver station of the said plurality, a selection signal indicating whether or not the base transceiver station concerned is to transmit the said subsequent downlink signal to the said mobile station.

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4. A network as claimed in claim 1, wherein each base transceiver station of the said plurality includes such candidate base transceiver station identifying means and such network interference determining means and such decision means.

5. A network as claimed in claim 4, wherein the respective decision means in the said base transceiver stations of the said plurality cooperate in their respective decisions so as to tend to reduce the said network interference arising from the transmission of the said subsequent downlink signal.

6. A network as claimed in claim 1, further including base station controller means connected to the said base transceiver stations of the said plurality for delivering such downlink signals thereto, the said base station controller means including the said candidate base transceiver station identifying means and the said network interference determining means and the said decision means.

7. A network as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein at least one of the said candidate selections does not specify one or more of the base transceiver stations of the said plurality, and the network further includes disabling means operable, in the event that the said decision means decides to use that candidate selection for transmission of the said subsequent downlink signal, to prevent the or each base transceiver station not specified in that candidate selection from transmitting the said subsequent downlink signal.

8. A network as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein at least one of the said candidate selections specifies two or more base transceiver stations of the said plurality, and the said mobile station includes combiner means operable to combine the respective downlink signals received from those two or more base

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transceiver stations.

9. A network as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the said candidate base transceiver station identifying means are also operable to determine a required transmission power for each base transceiver station specified in such a candidate selection.

10. A network as claimed in claim 9, wherein the said candidate base transceiver station identifying means include:

path loss calculation means for calculating, for each base transceiver station specified in such a candidate selection, a measure of the path loss between the base transceiver station concerned and the mobile station;

required received power calculation means for calculating a minimum power at which the mobile station should receive downlink signals; and

required transmission power calculation means for calculating the said required transmission power for each base transceiver station specified in the candidate selection based on the calculated minimum power and the said path-loss measure for the base transceiver station concerned.

11. A network as claimed in any preceding claim, further including ranking means operable to determine an order of ranking of the base transceiver stations of the said plurality, and to transmit a ranking message to each base transceiver station of the said plurality to inform it of its rank in the determined ranking order.

12. A network as claimed in claim 11 when read as appended to claim 3, wherein the said ranking means are included in the said mobile station and the said selection signals are provided in a base transceiver station selection message included in such uplink signals transmitted by the mobile station to the base

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transceiver stations, the order of the said selection signals in the base transceiver station selection message corresponding to the said determined ranking order.

- 5 13. A network as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the said candidate base transceiver station identifying means include:

10 transmit power storage means having storage regions corresponding respectively to the base transceiver stations of the said plurality, each storage region serving to store a measure of the downlink transmission power of its corresponding base transceiver station.

- 15 14. A network as claimed in claim 13, wherein the said candidate base transceiver station identifying means further include:

20 storage initialisation means operable, when a measure of the initial downlink transmission power of one of the base transceiver stations of the said plurality is received, to cause that initial measure to be stored in the storage region corresponding to that base transceiver station of the said transmit power storage means; and

25 storage updating means operable, when power control information specifying a change to the said downlink transmission power for the base transceiver concerned is received, to update the stored measure for that base transceiver station in accordance with the specified change.

- 30 15. A network as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the said candidate base transceiver station identifying means include:

35 received power storage means having storage regions corresponding respectively to the base transceiver stations of the said plurality, each such storage region serving to store a measure of the power

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at which a downlink signal transmitted to the mobile station by the corresponding base station is received by the mobile station.

5 16. A network as claimed in claim 10, wherein the said path loss calculation means are operable to calculate the path loss for such a specified base transceiver station in dependence upon the difference between a downlink transmission power of the base transceiver station concerned and the power at which a downlink
10 signal transmitted by the base transceiver station concerned to the mobile station is received by the mobile station.

17. A network as claimed in any preceding claim,
15 wherein the said base transceiver stations of the said plurality are base transceiver stations that are involved in a soft hand-off operation of the network.

18. A mobile station, for use in a cellular mobile communications network, including:

20 candidate base transceiver station identifying means operable, when the mobile station is capable of receiving a downlink signal from a plurality of base transceiver stations of the network, to identify at least two different candidate base transceiver station selections, each such candidate selection specifying
25 one or more base transceiver stations of the said plurality for possible use in transmitting a subsequent such downlink signal to the mobile station;

network interference determining means operable for each of the candidate selections, to produce a
30 measure of the network interference that would be caused by the base transceiver station(s) specified in that selection transmitting the said subsequent downlink signal to the said mobile station; and

35 decision means operable, in dependence upon the said network-interference measures, to decide which one of the candidate selections should be used to transmit

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the said subsequent downlink signal to the mobile station, so as to tend to reduce network interference arising from the transmission of that downlink signal.

5 19. A mobile station as claimed in claim 18, wherein the said decision means are operable to transmit to each base transceiver station of the said plurality a selection signal indicating whether or not that base transceiver station is to transmit the said subsequent downlink signal to the mobile station.

10 20. A base transceiver station, for use in a cellular mobile communications network, including:

candidate base transceiver station identifying means operable, when a mobile station of the network is capable of receiving a downlink signal from a plurality
15 of base transceiver stations of the network including the claimed base transceiver station, to identify at least two different candidate base transceiver station selections, each such candidate selection specifying one or more base transceiver stations of the said
20 plurality for possible use in transmitting a subsequent such downlink signal to the mobile station;

network interference determining means operable, for each of the said candidate selections, to produce a measure of the network interference that would be
25 caused by the base transceiver station(s) specified in that selection transmitting the said subsequent downlink signal to the mobile station; and

decision means operable, in dependence upon the network-interference measures, to decide which one of
30 the said candidate selections should be used to transmit the said subsequent downlink signal to the mobile station, so as to tend to reduce network interference arising from the transmission of that downlink signal.

35 21. A base transceiver station as claimed in claim 20, further including disabling means operable, in the

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event that the candidate selection decided upon by the decision means does not include the claimed base transceiver station, to prevent that base transceiver station from transmitting the said subsequent downlink signal.

5

22. A base station controller, for use in a cellular mobile communications network, including:

candidate base transceiver station identifying means operable, when a mobile station of the network is capable of receiving a downlink signal from a plurality of base transceiver stations of the network, to identify at least two different candidate base transceiver station selections, each such candidate selection specifying one or more base transceiver stations of the said plurality for possible use in transmitting a subsequent such downlink signal to the said mobile station;

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network interference determining means operable, for each of the said candidate selections, to produce a measure of the network interference that would be caused by the base transceiver station(s) specified in that selection transmitting the said subsequent downlink signal to the mobile station; and

25

decision means operable, in dependence upon the network-interference measures, to decide which one of the candidate selections to use to transmit the said subsequent downlink signal to the mobile station, so as to tend to reduce network interference arising from the transmission of that downlink signal.

30

23. A communications method for use in a cellular mobile communications network, including:

35

when a mobile station of the network is capable of receiving a downlink signal from a plurality of base transceiver stations of the network, identifying at least two different candidate base transceiver station selections, each such selection specifying one or more

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base transceiver stations of the said plurality for possible use in transmitting a subsequent such downlink signal to the mobile station;

5 producing, for each of the said candidate selections, a measure of the network interference that would be caused by the base transceiver station(s) specified in that selection transmitting the said subsequent downlink signal to the mobile station; and

10 deciding, in dependence upon the network-interference measures, which one of the said candidate selections to use to transmit that subsequent downlink signal to the mobile station, so as to tend to reduce network interference arising from the transmission of that downlink signal.

15 24. A mobile station, for use a cellular mobile communications network, including:

base transceiver station decision means operable, when the mobile station is capable of receiving a downlink signal from a plurality of base transceiver stations of the network, to determine that at least one of the base transceiver stations of the said plurality is not to transmit a subsequent such downlink signal to the mobile station; and

20 base transceiver station informing means operable to inform the base transceiver stations of the said plurality of the determination made by the said base transceiver station decision means using one or more uplink signals transmitted by the mobile station to such base transceiver stations.

25 25. A base transceiver station for use in a cellular mobile communications network, including:

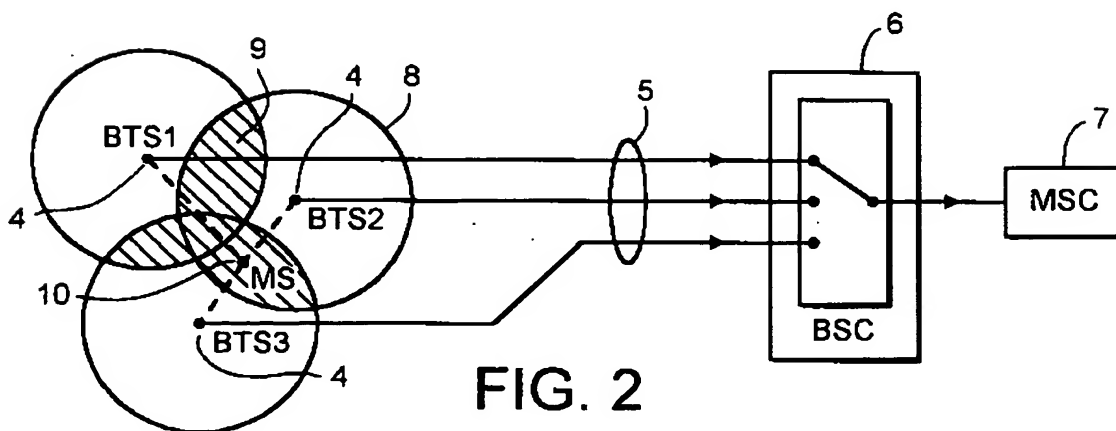
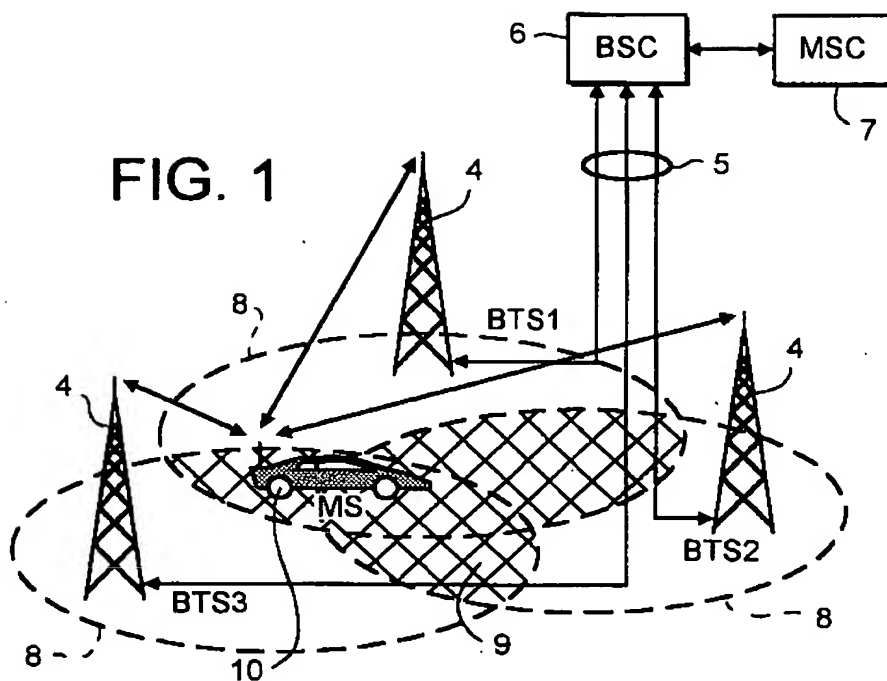
receiver means for receiving uplink signals from a mobile station of the network, one or more of which uplink signals includes, when the mobile station is capable of receiving a downlink signal from a plurality of base transceiver stations of the network including

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-39-

the claimed base transceiver station, base transceiver station selection information specifying that at least one of the base transceiver stations of the said plurality is not to transmit a subsequent such downlink signal to the mobile station; and

5 disabling means operable to process such base transceiver station selection information and to prevent the claimed base transceiver station from transmitting such a subsequent downlink signal if the
10 received base transceiver station selection information specifies that the claimed base transceiver station is not to transmit the said subsequent downlink signal.



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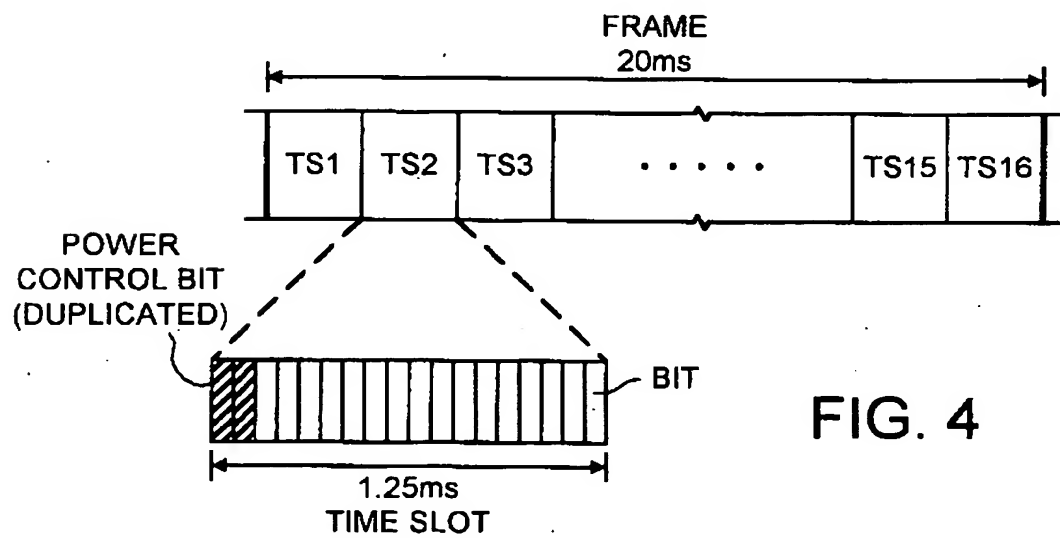
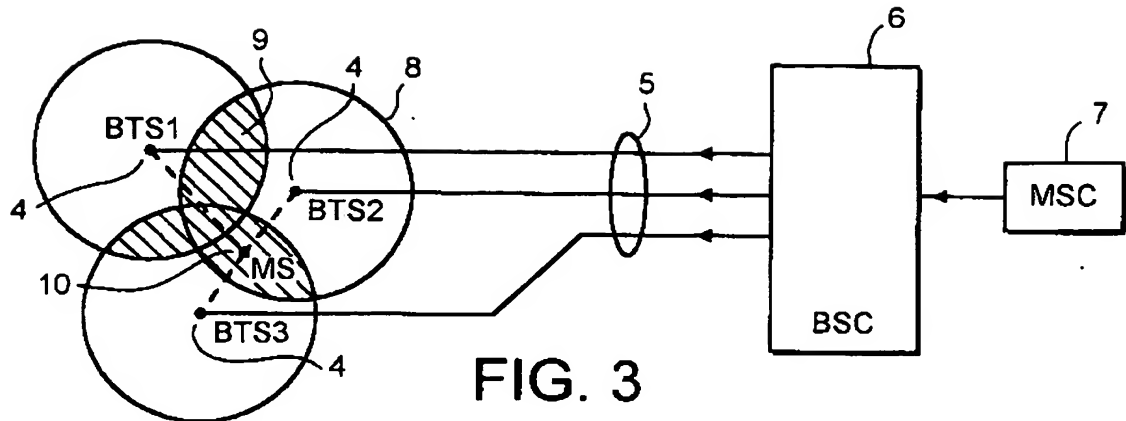
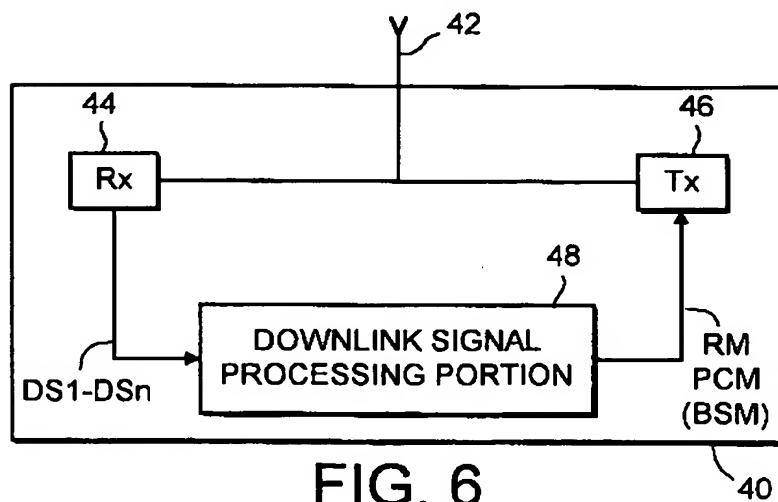
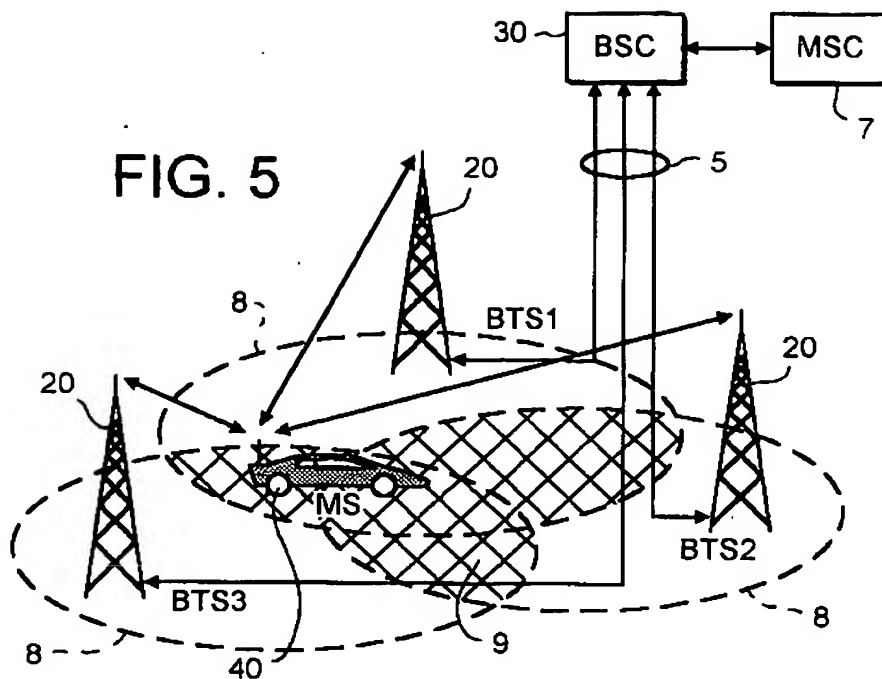


FIG. 4

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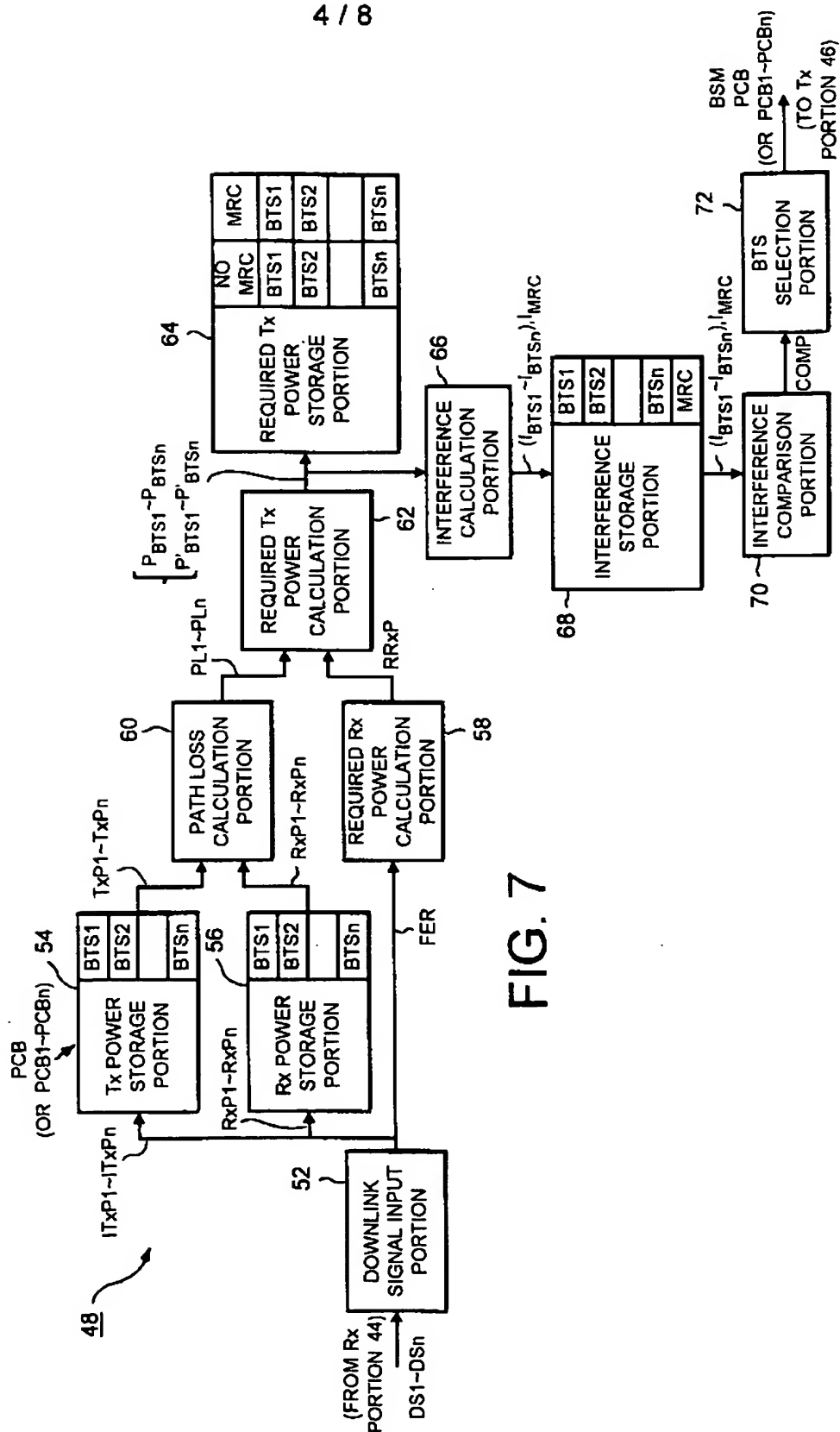


FIG. 7

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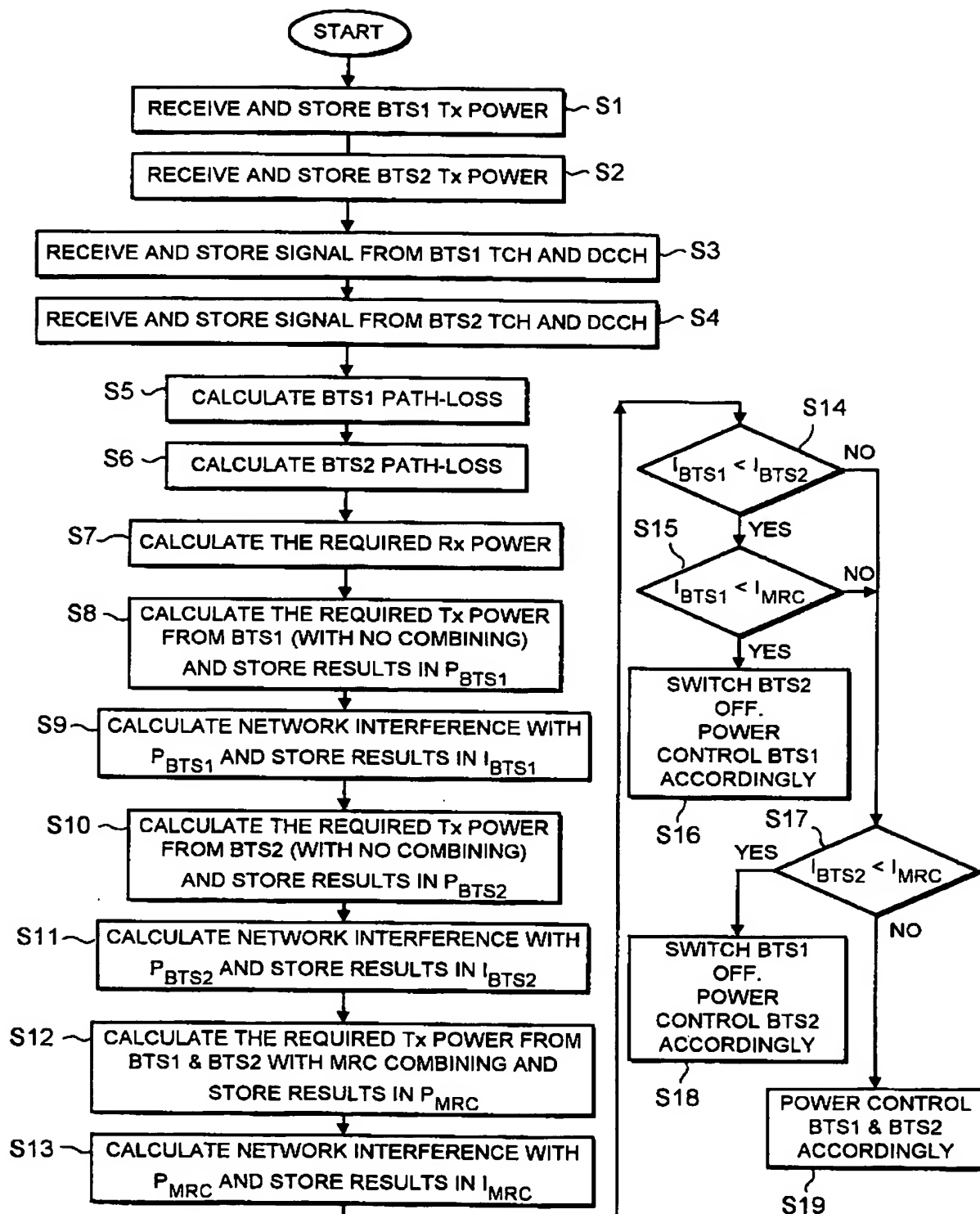


FIG. 8

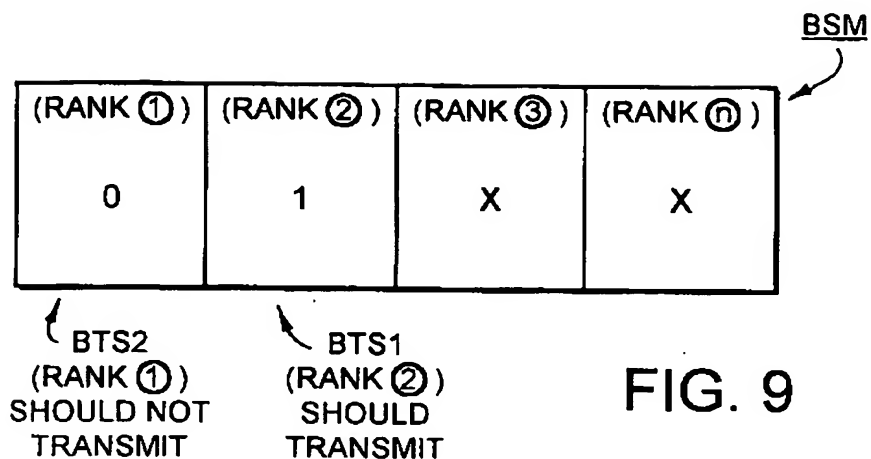


FIG. 9

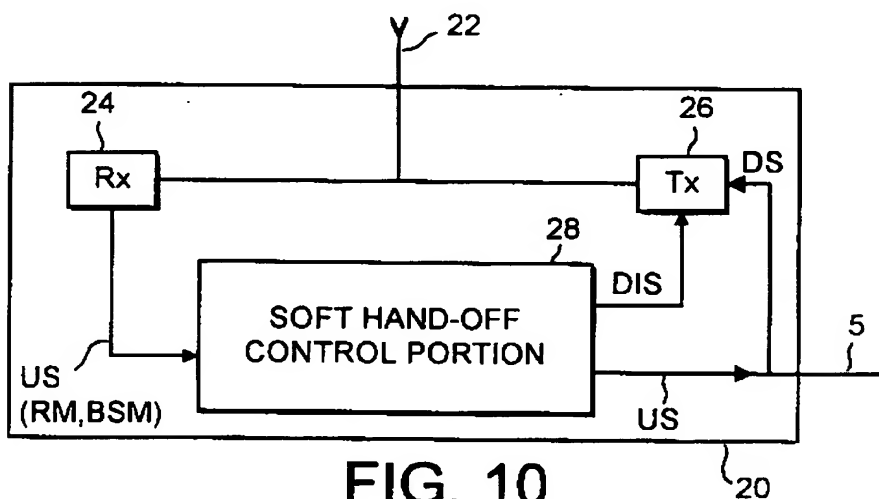


FIG. 10

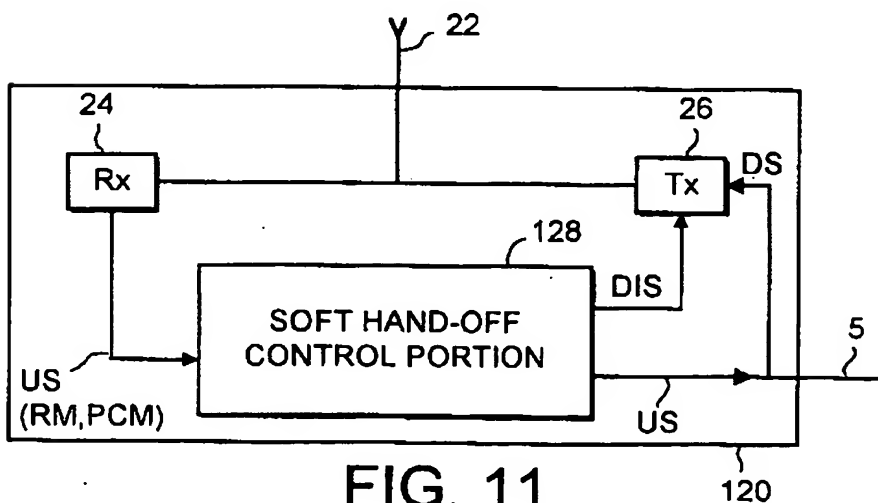


FIG. 11

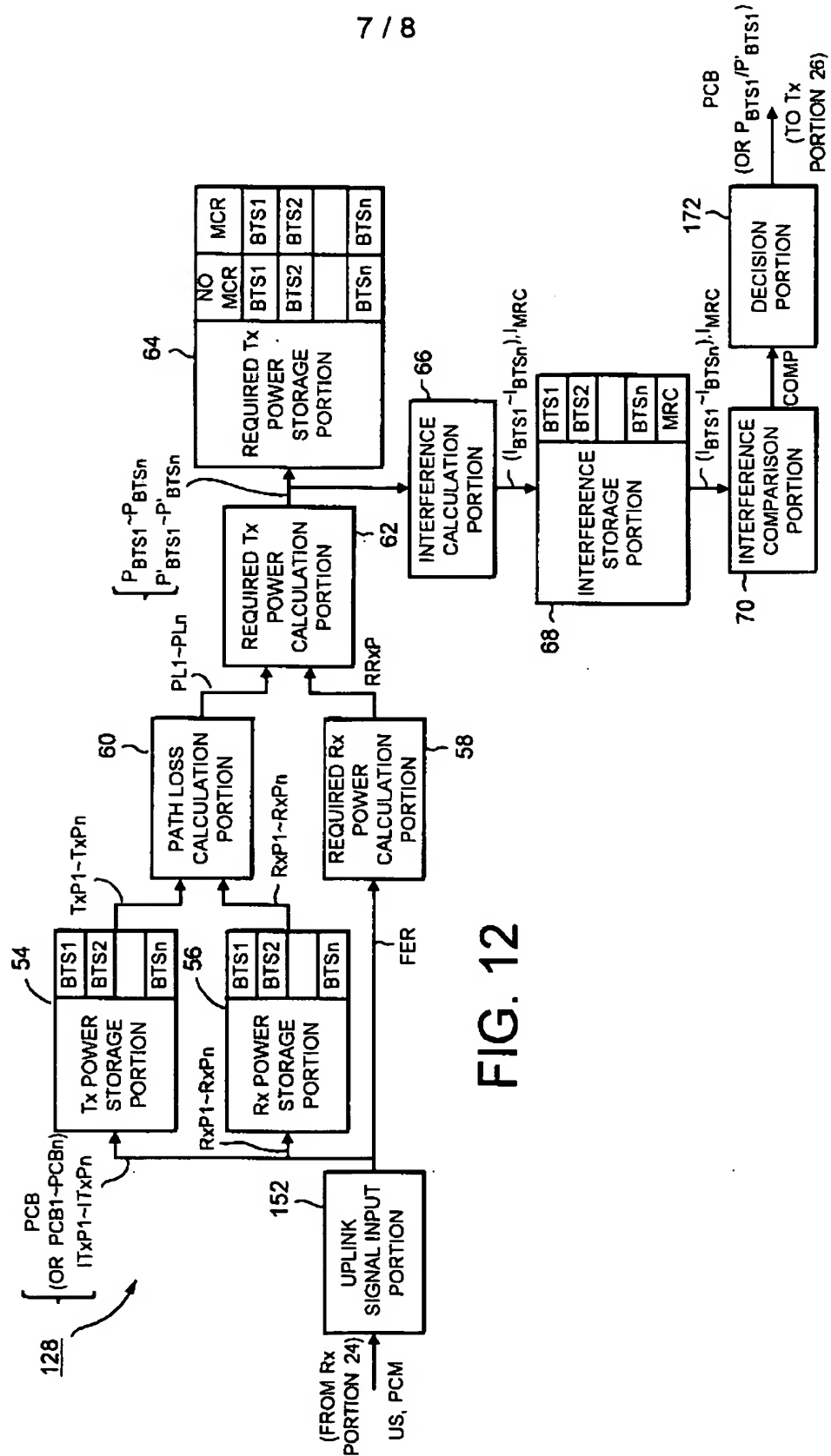


FIG. 12

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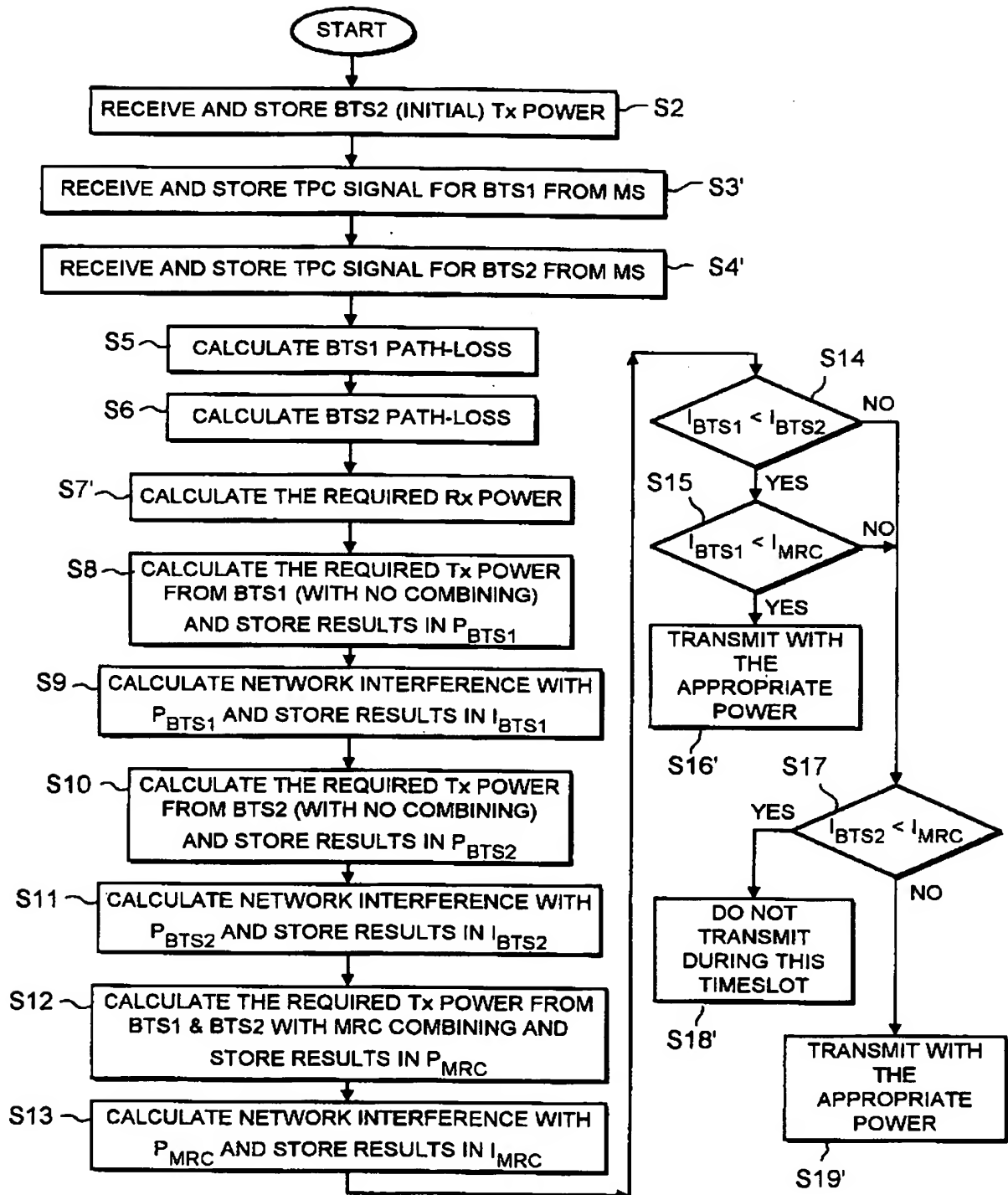


FIG. 13

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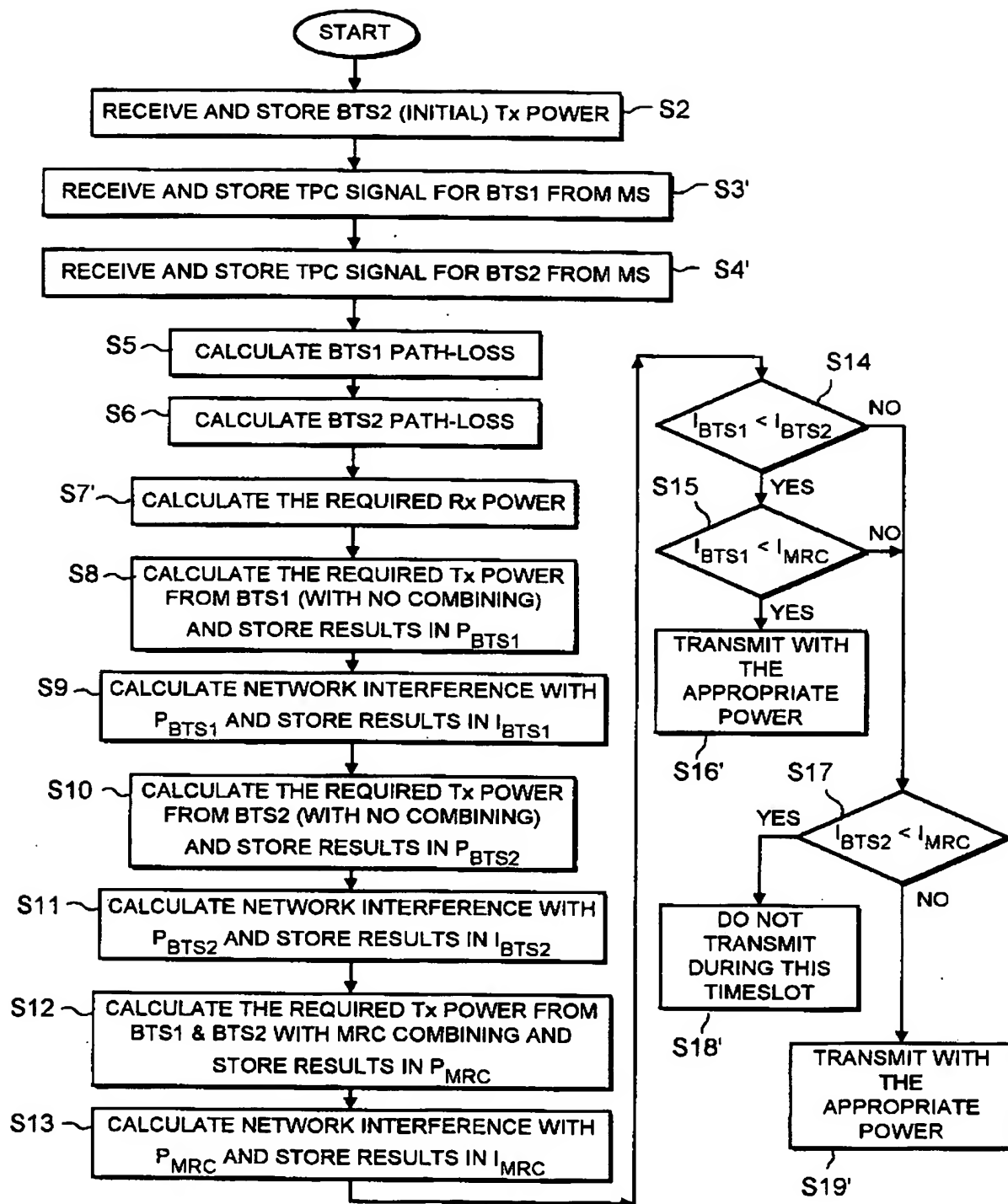


FIG. 13

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
PCT/GB 99/01344

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 6 H04Q7/38

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 6 H04Q H04B

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

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X	WO 97 41652 A (MOTOROLA INC) 6 November 1997 (1997-11-06)	1,6-8, 17-19, 22,23
A	page 41, line 2 - page 42, line 4 claim 6	2,4,5,9, 11,20
A	EP 0 797 367 A (NIPPON TELEGRAPH & TELEPHONE) 24 September 1997 (1997-09-24) column 5, line 30 - column 23, line 3	1-25
A	US 5 309 503 A (BRUCKERT EUGENE J ET AL) 3 May 1994 (1994-05-03) column 3, line 59 - column 10, line 21	1-25
A	EP 0 645 940 A (NIPPON TELEGRAPH & TELEPHONE) 29 March 1995 (1995-03-29) column 8, line 10 - column 13, line 51	1-25
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☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

17 August 1999

Date of mailing of the international search report

24/08/1999

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Roberti, V

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
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C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

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